

Do Not Judge

2-1-26

James 4:12 (ESV)

There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

God often and very clearly admonishes believers in the church not to judge one another. So we need to look closely at this subject. However, there also are circumstances where God clearly tells us to make judgements. This morning, we will look at both teachings and distinguish between the two. James 4:11 basically says that speaking evil or judging a fellow believer is putting yourself above the Law and above the God who wrote the Law. Then James 4:12 says that God is the only Lawgiver and Judge, who are we to judge our neighbor. Pretty clear. Do not speak evil or judge fellow believers. James reminds us, we are to live under the Royal Law:

James 2:8 (ESV)

Fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

God warns us of the destructive consequences of judgmental attitudes within the church.

Galatians 5:15 (ESV)

But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

Jesus HIMSELF likewise warns believers against being judgmental.

Matthew 7:1–2 (ESV)

Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.

The way we judge others, God will judge us. Being judgmental causes the church to self-destruct. Therefore, as believers we are under the Royal Law of love led by the Spirit not judging one another.

Galatians 5:18 (ESV)

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Believers are not under the Law “because” we are led by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the guiding agent in our lives. But, when believers are not led by the Spirit, the Law comes into play.

Now comes a touchy situation. If believers are not being led by the Spirit, acting like unbelievers, they fall under assessment by the Law.

1 Timothy 1:9 (ESV)

Understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just (believers) but for the lawless and disobedient.

God identifies the fruit of the Spirit and works of the flesh. God gives us information to guide us, to protect our family, and to protect the church. Therefore, we are called to make a judgement concerning lifestyles, dominating practices and behavior which are unacceptable to God.

1 Thessalonians 4:1–5 (ESV)

Finally, then, brothers (believers), we instructed you how to **live to please God, and to do so more and more. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;**⁴ that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor,⁵ not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles (unbelievers) who do not know God. **Therefore, whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives HIS Holy Spirit to you.**

Here Godly judgement says that if we commit immorality, we are not being led by the Spirit.
We live in a world consumed with immorality.
But God is very clear about how we are to behave. We are God's light to this dark world.
Listen carefully as God differentiates between the church's behavior and the world's behavior.

1 Corinthians 5:9–11 (ESV) NO/OH

⁹ I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—¹⁰ not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. ... (we must interact with the world) ...¹¹ **But** now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.

Anyone practicing these lifestyles are rejecting Christ's teaching. Brothers and sisters, where the Spirit is there is freedom. But anyone led by the Spirit would not be living these lifestyles. Therefore, proclaiming believers who live this way should be avoided.

We live to please God setting our eyes on Jesus and desiring to keep in step with the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:25 (ESV)

If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

Brothers and sisters, we represent God to the world. The church is a place of love and forgiveness. Our arms are opened wide to those seeking God. Those seeking truth as revealed in Jesus Christ. We embrace the Royal Law of Love. Therefore, serving God, we desire to keep in step with the Spirit.

Ephesians 4:32 (ESV)

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Brothers and sisters, we love God because HE first loved us.

John 3:16 (ESV)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.